

Message Text

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ACTION SCS-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CA-01 EB-08 CG-00 DOTE-00
FAA-00 PPTE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02 /042 W
-----026125 291918Z /53

O 291455Z MAR 78
FM AMCONSUL BARCELONA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4070
INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMCONSUL SEVILLE

UNCLAS BARCELONA 0242

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CPRS, CASC, SP (SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSION)
SUBJ: SEARCH AND RESCUE EFFORT: MISSING AMERICAN
YACHT ""HUCK FINN""

REF: BARCELONA 230

1. FOLLOWING IS UPDAE ON SEARCH AND RESCUE AS
CONDUCTED BY U.S. SIXTH FLEET, AND POST S EFFORTS TO INVOLVE
SPANISH SAR. AS REPORTED IN REFTEL, SPANISH AUTHORITIES
INITIALLY CONTACTED THROUGH OUR CONSULAR AGENT IN PALMA DE
MALLORCA. SIXTH FLEET INVOLVEMENT CAME ABOUT THROUGH USDAO
MADRID ON REQUEST OF ADMIRAL SMITH.

2. BECAUSE OF LONG TIME LAPSE BETWEEN DATE OF SAILING AND
DATE YACHT REPORTED OVERDUE, SPANISH AUTHORITIES WERE RELUCTANT
TO LAUNCH ALL OUT SEARCH EFFORT. CONTRARY TO INFO REPORTED
REFTEL, SAR DID NOT OFFICIALLY BEGAN SEARCH UNTIL AFTERNOON
OF MARCH 22. IN THE MEANTIME, USDAO MADRID HAD SENT A NUMBER
OF MESSAGES REQUESTING PARTICIPATION BY SIXTH FLEET. REPORT
FROM THAT OFFICE MORNING OF MARCH 22 CONFIRMED THAT FLEET
VESSELS OPERATING AREA OF IBIZA WERE FLYING SORTIES IN S AND
R EFFORT. MEANWHILE, MR. ROBERT STILES WHO HAD REPORTED VESSEL
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MISSING CAME TO BARCELONA WHERE HE HOPED TO JOIN (BUT DID NOT)
SAR OR 6TH FLEET EFFORT. HE LATER WENT TO MADRID ON MARCH 24
TO DISCUSS SITUATION DIRECTLY WITH USDAO.

3. ON EVENING MARCH 22, AMCONSUL SEVILLE, CALLED TO SAY
SPANISH AUTHORITIES HAD RECEIVED REPORT THAT A YACHT IDENTIFIED
AS THE HUCK FINN HAD PUT IN AT PORT OF MARBELLA MORNING OF

MARCH 20. REPORTEDLY, YACHT STAYED 15 MINUTES AND DEPARTED. CONSULAR OFFICER CALLED PORT OF MARBELLA AND SPOKE WITH SPANISH NAVY COMMANDER WHO CONFIRMED HAVING RECEIVED THE REPORT. HOWEVER, HE UNABLE PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OTHER THAN FACT HAT PORT OFFICIAL HAD SPOKEN TO A CREW MEMBER AND TOLD HIM VESSEL COULD NOT REMAIN IN AREA SINCE IT WAS RESERVED FOR FISSHING BOATS.

4. BASED ON CONVERSATION WITH PORT CAPTAIN POST ASSUMED SPANISH AUTXBRTIES WOULD SEEK TO SUBSTANTIATE REPORT. HOWEVER, IT LEARNED ON MARCH 25 THAT REPORT SERVED AS BASIS FOR OFFICIAL SUSPENSION OF ALL SAR ACTIVITIES. THAT SAME MESSAGE WAS PASSED UP THROUGH SPANISH NAVY CHANNELS TO JACC TORREJON AIR FORCE BASE MADRID. JACC TORREJON IN TURN CABLED CONFAIRMED AND RAMSTEIN AIR FORCE BASE, GERMANY RECOMMENDING SUSPENSION SIXTH FLEET PARTICIPATION. POST EFFORTS TO REACTIVATE SAR PENDING FIRM CONFIRMATION OF REPORTED SIGHTING OF VESSEL WERE NOT SUCCESSFUL.

5. AMCONSULATE SEVILLE CONTINUED SEARCH BY ALERTING ALL PORTS IN COSTA DEL SOL AREA. HOWEVER MAJOR PORTS OF MARBELLA, MALAGA, ESTEPONA, ALGECIRAS AND GIBRALTAR HAVE NOW ALL REPORTED NEGATIVELY TO SEARCHES CONDUCTED BY PORT AUTHORITIES.

6. MR. SILES DEPARTED MADRID FOR THE U.S. MORNING OF MARCH 27. HE WAS EXCEEDINGLY CRITICAL AND EXPRESSED DEEP UNCLASSIFIED

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DISAPPOINTMENT WITH FAILURE TO SECURE WHAT HE FELT SHOULD HAVE BEEN A MORE AGGRESSIVE AND POSITIVE ROLE BY SIXTH FLEET AND SPANISH AUTHORITIES.SINN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BARCEL00242
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780136-0859
Format: TEL
From: BARCELONA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780316/aaaaamro.tel
Line Count: 97
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: ba26febb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SCS
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BARCELONA 230
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3175637
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SEARCH AND RESCUE EFFORT: MISSING AMERICAN YACHT \"HUCK FINN\"
TAGS: CPRS, CASC, SP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ba26febb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014